

## Message Text

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47

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06  
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 /036 W  
----- 056853

R 090805Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3731  
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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E.O. 11652: NA  
TAGS: EAIR, RP  
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE HIJACKERS SENTENCED TO DEATH

REF: MANILA 17210

1. ON DECEMBER 6 A MILITARY TRIBUNAL MEETING IN ZAMBOANGA CITY SENTENCED TWO MEN TO DEATH BY MUSKETRY FOR HIJACKING A PHILIPPINE AIRLINE DOMESTIC FLIGHT ON FEBRUARY 25, 1975. PRESS GAVE PROMINENT PLAY FOR SENTENCING. THE PAL FLIGHT WAS 30 MINUTES OUT OF PAGANDIAN AIRPORT BOUND FOR ZAMBOANGA CITY WHEN THE HIJACKING OCCURED. THE TWO MEN, EMILIO ABARCA, JR., 38, AND CESAR TAC-AL, 29 BOTH RESIDENTS OF PAGANDIAN CITY, THREATENED THE CREW AND PASSENGERS WITH HAND GRENADES AND FIREARMS. THE PLANE WAS DIVERTED TO MACTAN AIRPORT IN CEBU WHERE IT WAS REFUELED AND FLOWN TO MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

2. BRIG. GEN. MARIANO CASTANEDA, COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE AVIATION SECURITY COMMAND, NEGOTIATED WITH THE HIJACKERS AND AFTER GEN. CASTANEDA AGREED THAT THE HIJACKERS' DEMANDS WOULD BE TRANSMITTED TO PRESIDENT MARCOS, THE HIJACKERS SURRENDERED. THE HIJACKERS' DEMANDS INCLUDED A FULL PARDON FOR ABARCA, WHO HAD ALSO BEEN INVOLVED IN A ROBBERY IN PAGANDIAN, A PARDON FOR TAC-AL FOR THE HIJACKING AND OTHER PERSONAL  
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REQUESTS INVOLVING EMPLOYMENT FOR ABARCA AND HIS WIFE.

3. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT THE HIJACKING WAS NOT POLITICALLY MOTIVATED BUT THE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT RESORTED TO APPEARS DESIGNED TO EMPHASIZE ONCE AGAIN THE HARD-LINE POLICY WHICH GOP IS TAKING TOWARD HIJACKERS. THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH SENTENCE IN A HIJACKING CASE, THE FIRST OCCURED LAST NOVEMBER 4 AND INVOLVED THE HIJACKING OF A PAL AIRLINER, IN WHICH TEN PASSENGERS AND THREE HIJACKERS WERE KILLED AND THE PLANE DESTROYED (SEE REFTTEL). AN EDITORIAL IN THE BULLETIN TODAY OF DECEMBER 9, ASKED RHETORICALLY IF SENTENCE WASN'T A BIT HARSH SINCE THERE WERE NO INJURIES OR PROPERTY DAMAGE AND, IN ANSWER, CONCLUDED THAT TERRORIST PSYCHOLOGY DEMANDS THAT NO WEAKNESS BE SHOWN IN DEALING WITH THEM. UNSAID WAS THE FACT THAT THE TERRORISTS HAD SURRENDERED ON "A PARSON" FOR THE HIJACKING. THIS HAS OMINOUS PORTENTS FOR FUTURE HIJACKINGS.

SULLIVAN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** AIRCRAFT HIJACKING, MOSLEMS, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, COURT DECISIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 09 DEC 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ElyME  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
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**Office:** ACTION EA  
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**Subject:** PHILIPPINE HIJACKERS SENTENCED TO DEATH  
**TAGS:** EAIR, PINS, RP, PAL, (ABARCA, EMILIO), (TAC-AL, CESAR)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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